Digital Photography for Plant Problem Diagnosis or Plant ID

Digital images of plants and plant problems can be very useful for diagnosis and identification. In order to help us with your plant, we ask our customers to provide photographs of the plant. Digital pictures are easy to submit. Here are tips to help send better pictures.

1. Get different perspectives.
- Provide a variety of pictures.
- Take pictures of the whole plant.
- Take a picture of the whole yard, including the plant.
- Take close up pictures of disease symptoms or other small features on a plant.
- On trees, take pictures of it from further away so the whole tree is seen, plus pictures of the trunk and base of the tree as well as any problem areas.
- On lawns, it's helpful to get a photo from above. If possible take a photo from a second story to allow us to see the whole lawn.

2. Make sure the lighting is right. This may mean trying different angles and locations.

3. Make sure that the features of the plant or the plant disease are in full light, as shadows can obscure the specimen and what you want to be seen.

4. Focus, focus, focus.
- Make sure the specimen (plant, plant symptoms) that's seen is clear.
- To focus a cell phone camera, often times simply tapping the screen will adjust the focus automatically. For standard point and shoot cameras, pushing the capture button down half-way will focus most cameras. If a close up is required look for the macro option on the camera, often a tulip icon or button.

5. Include a size reference.
- Depending on the size, place a coin, pencil, ruler, or yardstick next to the specimen in the photograph.

6. Take several pictures (digital film is free!) but send only the best three or four (limit four).

7. Attach your image file to an email message. Send your digital files attached in an email to mggpa@bouldercounty.org. If your sample is associated with a physical sample make sure to include in the subject the submitter last name, plant/crop and sample submission date (MM/DD/YY). Example: Smith-maple-05/20/15.

9. Include basic information about the subject of your photo in your message.
- Provide the background information about the plant
  - Include: where it is growing, when symptoms were noticed, how many plants are affected, and any other relevant details.

10. Don't get rid of any specimen material.

11. If the problem or specimen cannot be identified from the photo, the Clinic may need another physical sample brought in. In the case of a lawn or tree issue, a site visit may be needed to diagnose the problem. Those are available for an extra fee.